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REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF STATE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF ESTABLISHING A UNIFORMITY

IN THE

WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND COINS

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY FRANCIS CHILDS AND JOHN SWAINE.
MDCCXC.

RPJCB

New-York, *July* 4, 1790.

S I R,

IN obedience to the order of the Houſe of Repreſentatives, of January 15th, I have now the honor to incloſe you a Report *on the ſubject of* Measures, Weights, *and* Coins. *The length of time which intervened between the date of the order and my arrival in this city, prevented my receiving it till the 15th of April ; and an illneſs which followed ſoon after, added, unavoidably, ſome weeks to the delay ; ſo that it was not till about the 20th of May that I was able to finiſh the Report. A deſire to leſſen the number if its imperfections, induced me ſtill to withhold it awhile, till, on the 15th of June, came to my hands, from Paris, a printed copy of a propoſition made by the Biſhop of* Autun, *to the National Aſſembly of France, on the ſubject of Weights and Meaſures ; and three days afterwards I received through the channel of the public papers, the ſpeech of* Sir John Riggs Miller, *of April 13th, in the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, on the ſame ſubject. In the report which I had prepared, and was then about to give in, I had propoſed the latitude of 38°, as that which ſhould fix our ſtandard, becauſe it was the medium latitude of the United States ; but the propoſition before the National Aſſembly of France, to take that of 45° as being a middle term between the Equator and both Poles, and a term which might conſequently unite the nations of both hemiſpheres, appeared to me ſo well choſen, and ſo juſt, that I did not heſitate a moment to prefer it to that of 38°. It became neceſſary of courſe to reform all my calculations to that ſtandard ; an operation which has been retarded by my other occupations.*

Theſe circumſtances will, I hope, apologize for the delay which has attended the execution of the order of the Houſe : And, perhaps, a diſpoſition on their part, to have due regard to the proceedings of other nations, engaged on the ſame ſubject, may induce them ſtill to defer deciding ultimately on it till their next ſeſſion. Should this be the caſe, and ſhould any new matter occur in the mean time, I ſhall think it my duty to communicate it to the Houſe, as ſupplemental to the preſent Report.

I have the Honor to be,

With Sentiments of the moſt profound Reſpect,

S I R,

Your moſt obedient, and

Moſt humble Servant,

Thomas Jefferſon.

The Speaker of the Houſe of Repreſentatives.

16113

October 24, 1791.

* This return was not ſigned by the Marſhal, but was incloſed and referred to in a letter written and ſigned by him.

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